

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE



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Portland Window Distributor Charged with Sales Tax Theft

OLYMPIA, Wash., May 20, 2002—The owner of NW Window & Door in Portland was charged today with stealing \$233,953 in Washington state sales tax that she allegedly collected from a Clark County homebuilder but never remitted to the State Department of Revenue.

The Washington Attorney General's Office, in cooperation with the Clark County Prosecuting Attorney, charged Darlene L. Myers, 37, with felony counts of theft and filing false or fraudulent state tax returns. The charges carry maximum penalties of 5 years in jail and a \$10,000 fine.

According to the charging papers, Myers collected sales tax from January 1989 through June 2000 on sales of windows and doors to Aho Construction, but falsely reported those sales as wholesale rather than retail so she could divert the tax revenues to her own use. Aho Construction cooperated in the investigation and was not accused of any wrongdoing.

The scheme allegedly began to unravel after NW Window & Door got into financial trouble and its supplier, Summit Windows, canceled its distributorship. Myers claimed that an employee stole \$70,000 from the business and fled the country, but this explanation was never confirmed.

Sales taxes are trust funds, not the property of the business that collects them. Oregon companies that regularly deliver taxable products into Washington may be required by law to charge tax.

The Financial Crimes Unit of the Attorney General's Office handled the case for the Department of Revenue. Its principal investigator is Darryl Roosendaal, (206) 464-6430.

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